

**THE BREAD OF IDLENESS**

**GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN**

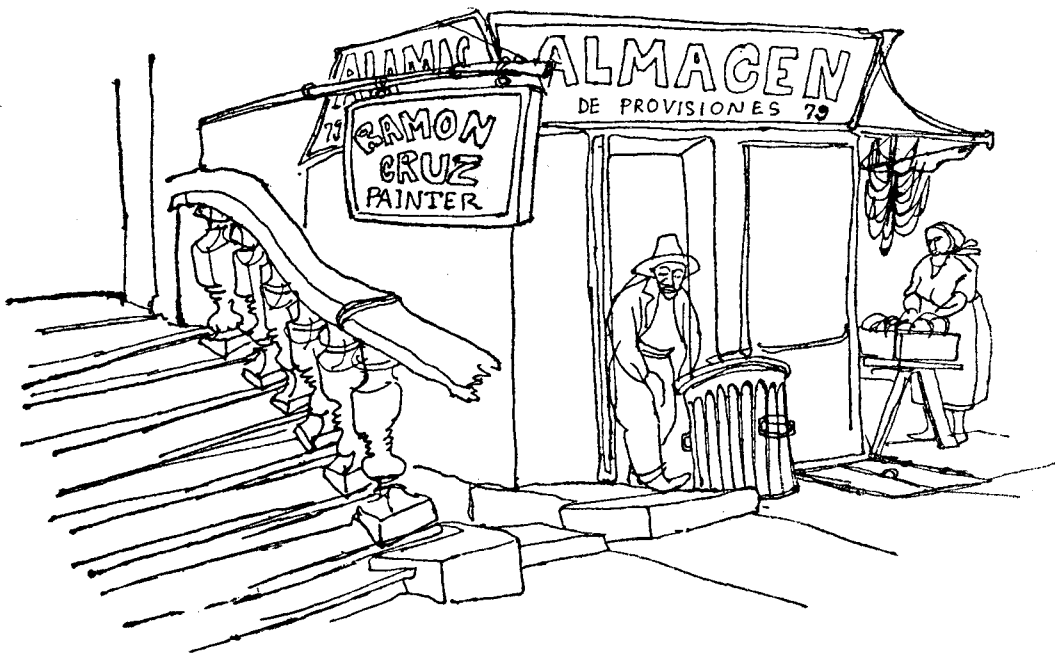
**THE**

# **Commonweal**

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**THE PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK**  
**STRANGERS IN THE CITY**

**James O'Gara**



## **Donne's Quest for Unity**

**Martin Turnell**

**ANNE FREMANTLE   THEODORE MAYNARD   JEAN HOLZHAUER**

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**Volume LVII, Number 1**

**October 10, 1952**

**Twenty Cents**

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**The Washboiler  
that Grew Into  
the World's  
Leading  
Church  
Candle  
Factory...**



**NINETY-SIX YEARS** AGO, young Anton Will and his wife, Rosina, put some beeswax, some candlemaking knowledge and a lot of hope into a washboiler on the kitchen stove. That, in a 10 by 10 kitchen, on a modest side street of Syracuse, N. Y., was the start of the world's leading church-candle factory.

Patiently, Anton and Rosina dipped braided cotton wicks into the melted wax; drew them out to harden, and dipped them over and over again. When the wicks were coated to proper size, they rolled the wax into graceful candles. Candles of pure beeswax. Catholic churches bought them eagerly. Anton and Rosina became the pioneer church candlemakers in America.

**Debt, Death and a Widow's Might**

Came the day when reputation of the small concern reached New York City. A large buyer there sent an order for a thousand pounds of candles. Anton didn't have all the money to buy that much beeswax. A Syracuse friend came to the rescue and lent him the money.

Then Anton died. Rosina alone, with three small boys to support, carried on. Before long, the boys were busy dipping wicks. And today two of the sons of those boys are officers in the company which ships beeswax products by the millions . . . imports crude beeswax from all continents.

All crude beeswax is tested first by the laboratory . . . graded for various uses, refined, purified and bleached snow-white under the sun. Only the finest, whitest and purest of the refined bleached beeswax is used for the church candles that gave the company its start and its reputation.



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**CANDLE CO. INC.**

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SYRACUSE BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO  
MONTREAL LOS ANGELES

**CANDLE CRAFTSMEN FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS**

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# THE Commonweal

week by week

## THE DEFENSE OF CHECKERS

THE ways of politics continue as unpredictable as ever. For a few days, it almost seemed as if the Democrats had a secret ally in the Republican ranks; if Nixon had been privately devoted to Adlai Stevenson, he could hardly have given him a better issue than the "Poor Richard" fund.

But in the space of a few days the tide is said to have turned. By some strange alchemy, the secrets of which are known only to the regular purveyors of the TV package, Nixon is now said to have grown tremendously in national stature and to have added new strength to the Republican ticket.

We are not yet convinced that this is so. Getting a true picture of national opinion is never easy, and it is doubly hard in this case because the press is so heavily Republican in its sympathy. But whether or not the voters now approve of the Nixon affair, we continue to be profoundly dissatisfied.

When the existence of the special fund was first discovered, Senator Nixon tried to brush off the accusations against him as a smear attempt. On board the Eisenhower train, the silent method was first tried out, helped by the failure of the Associated Press to carry the story for hours after it broke and by the fact that many pro-Ike papers buried the sensational story with the obituaries.

Despite all this, public indignation mounted. Then it was announced that Nixon would give a full accounting to the American people, and after all the facts were known, Eisenhower would decide whether or not he should be dropped from the ticket. Sentiment among pro-Ike newspapers at this time ran two-to-one against Nixon.

Came the grand climax, the Nixon TV and radio appearance, written and directed by and starring Nixon himself, with stand-by assistance from his wife. In it, we learned that Nixon came of poor but honest parents; that he owned two houses, both mortgaged; that his wife was Irish, had been born on St. Patrick's Day, and like him was no quitter.

Nor was this all that was disclosed. Without having included it in their platform, the Democrats evidently nurse a deep hatred for dogs (if not for children), because the Senator felt obliged to ex-

plain all about his little girl's dog. Someone had sent a cocker spaniel to him as a gift, one of his daughters had named it Checkers, and despite anything the Democrats might say, Senator Nixon was *not* going to take that dog away from his little girl.

SO it went, a great show of frankness, a dash of mock modesty while citing his war record, a mention of his wife's "good Republican cloth coat" rather than a mink, a word about his hard-working parents to whom he is paying four per cent interest on a loan. The \$18,000? Somehow that issue became obscured in the larger entertainment.

He did take \$18,000, the Senator said, but it was for political expenses he did not feel should be charged to the taxpayer. He did not go into the fact that he receives some \$60,000 a year over his salary for expenses and spends every last cent of it. The implication of his talk was that somehow or other he had saved the taxpayer \$18,000, despite the fact that what he spent the money on could not have been charged to the government.

The most amazing thing about the entire Nixon presentation was that not once did he suggest that he had even been guilty of an error in judgment. Not once did he seriously discuss the real issue, which was not so much his personal honesty as the wisdom of having such a private fund.

Reports are that Nixon's TV appearance won him many new supporters. Even though it is generally accepted that Americans are a sentimental people, we find this a phenomenon hard to understand. If it is really a fact, we think it speaks better for those moved by his performance than it does for Nixon himself. From where we sat, Nixon's "accounting" looked like a rather cheap attempt to exploit decent human emotions, and to our mind it provided a more accurate index to Nixon's mentality than the revelation of a dozen secret funds.

Legislative salaries are far from adequate, and long before the Nixon case broke into the news we editorially favored raising them substantially. But such increases should come from public funds, not from private sources. There should be no doubt

that a U. S. Senator represents all the people of his state, not just a few. The possibilities of abuse inherent in private endowment should be obvious.

That it was obvious to Eisenhower from the start seems clear, and this fact makes the General's later conduct one of the most disheartening things about the entire Nixon affair. Even after many people had succumbed completely to Nixon's emotional orgy, Ike still said he wanted a more complete accounting.

But when the telegrams started to come, Ike changed his mind, deciding that Nixon was "completely vindicated" without even waiting for the further explanation he had once demanded. Nixon, Ike now says, is "my boy." Somewhere along the line, the Great Crusade had lost the leader who had once showed such high promise. In his place was a man who decided great issues by counting telegrams.

### THE STEVENSON FUND

SENATOR Nixon's radio and TV melodramatics created the impression that the use of funds contributed from outside is common practice in Washington. This suggestion produced in many citizens feelings of revulsion about American politics. And it resulted in a fuzzy lumping together of the Nixon fund in Washington with the private payments by Mr. Stevenson to eight Illinois officials.

There is an unmistakable surface resemblance. Undeniably, this nation is not well served when contributions from individuals take the place of authorized government funds. Likewise when the existence of such arrangements remains unknown to the average voter, it greatly weakens public confidence in the government.

Beyond that, the differences between the two situations are extreme. The Nixon fund came from a

small number of California citizens with similar economic interests; the Stevenson contributors were much more numerous and representative. Moreover, the bulk of the Illinois fund was simply what was left over from Governor Stevenson's 1948 campaign fund and given into his charge. To say the least, the gifts which the donors to the gubernatorial campaign fund made to the eight state officials were indirect, if not actually involuntary.

For their part, the recipients were unaware of the identity of the donors; the danger of being influenced toward advancing special interests was not present. Mr. Stevenson's object was to obtain good government at a time of urgent need for reform.

His device was also of a clearly temporary character. Going salary schedules for the state jobs in question were clearly unequal to securing the men whose competence he felt Illinois then required. Until the state legislature put through the required increases, supplements to their salaries, he felt, were needed.

Although there was little danger of favors for special interests in this procedure, it remains open to serious question. The fact that the Governor would take such matters into his own hands is a worrisome thought which his record of disinterestedness cannot wholly efface. But the use to which he put the idle campaign funds is a far cry from an arrangement which makes a supposed public servant so beholden to a small and special group.

### NEW THIRD FORCE

IN the very first postwar years there was much talk about building up in Europe a Third Force—to stand between American capitalism and Russian communism. It was to be largely ideological in inspiration. The Socialists and Social Democrats on the Continent together with the British Labor Party were to serve the interests of peace by acting as a link between East and West. As it turned out, many of these political groups proved to be weak and vacillating; they were no match for their Stalinist counterparts.

The original hopes for an effective Third Force have declined steadily. Today the term has almost gone into disuse. The possibility of reviving it comes from a non-ideological quarter and is a direct result of American aid in the revival and reorganizing of a politically variegated Europe.

The iron and coal Community of "Little Europe," the coming European Army, the plans for a new trading area comprising the British Commonwealth and Western Europe and its colonies, the Council and the Assembly of the projected Euro-

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## NEXT WEEK

JULIE BEDIER writes an account of the death of Bishop Francis X. Ford.

"It was a chill day in January 1952 and the dank atmosphere of the unheated Chinese prison struck through to the marrow of the bones. A slight, emaciated young woman, in ragged Chinese garments, limped along the dark corridor. She was a Maryknoll Sister, far from her native land. She slipped and went down on one knee. She struggled to rise and then stopped breathless . . . What she saw was a prisoner, a Chinese, carrying a man down the stairs, slung over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes . . ."

pean federation, all point to the gradual emergence of a new and eventually powerful political entity.

Hitherto power has unhappily gravitated around the United States and the Soviet Union. Other nations have been more or less forced to tag along. Here is a new international group that should in time be able to act independently on its own initiative. Happily such a development has been an American objective all along.

### GEORGE SANTAYANA

IN the celebrated "definition" with which he concluded his discourse on "Knowledge and Religious Duty," John Henry Newman observed that the "gentleman," even if he be an unbeliever, will yet be "too profound and large minded to ridicule religion or to act against it." He will, rather, be a man "who respects piety and devotion" and supports institutions "as venerable, beautiful, or useful to which he cannot give his assent."

And though his ideal natural "gentleman" may not be an orthodox Christian, the Cardinal continued, he will probably embrace a type of personal religion: "In that case his religion is one of imagination and sentiment; it is the embodiment of those ideas of the sublime, majestic and beautiful, without which there can be no large philosophy."

This ideal of the magnanimous man unilluminated by Revelation might well serve as the epitaph of George Santayana, the magnanimous man *par excellence* of our century, whose death in Rome on September 27 has left us all much poorer. For with a brilliance and a dedication which has become a contemporary legend, Santayana lived and symbolized that "life of reason" which is Western humanity's highest natural goal.

Twenty years ago, at his last public appearance, Santayana asked an audience of philosophers gathered at The Hague to commemorate the tercentenary of Spinoza's birth, "provisionally, for an hour, and without prejudice to your ulterior reasonable convictions, to imagine the truth to be as unfavorable as possible to your desires, and as contrary as possible to your natural presumptions; so that the spirit in each of us may be drawn away from its accidental home and subjected to an utter denudation and supreme trial."

This request was no accident of rhetorical flourish: Santayana's whole intellectual and spiritual life was such a denudation and trial. His skepticism was so innate and compelling that it shaped all his speculations to the conclusion that the truth could not be as he wished it to be. He could never postulate as *real* those things for which, as *ideals*, he had sworn

eternal friendship.

This constitutional pessimism, stoically accepted and philosophically refined, prevented his ever, in this life, finding for his ideals a local habitation and a concrete name. And so, though he loved and honored the Christian Revelation and the Catholic Church above all other things, he could not bring himself, finally, to accept them philosophically; they seemed to him simply too good to be true. The result was that remarkable detachment, nostalgia, and regret which distinguished all his work.

"For my own part," Santayana wrote of his youth, "I was quite certain that life was not worth living; for if religion was false everything was worthless; and almost everything if religion was true . . . I saw the same alternative between Catholicism and complete disillusion: but I was never afraid of disillusion, and I have chosen it."

But Santayana's early disillusion did not turn, as in the case of some others, to bitterness or mockery. His genius was consecrated to the service of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, as, given the exigencies of his temperament, he could conceive them. His role as the spiritually homeless man was part of his deep participation in the tragic sense of life. His sorrow in this role is commemorated in one of his autobiographical sonnets, in which he assures us that although he stands outside the Church he would enter could he honestly do so:

*. . . some are born to stand perplexed aside  
From so much sorrow . . . of whom I am one.*

This standing "perplexed aside" was a unique and often misunderstood mission in a world torn by factions and fanaticisms. But Santayana's loyalties were pledged to ideals of the imagination and intellect which knew neither time nor place. His refusal to commit himself to the present made him an anomaly in this most committed of centuries, and his inability to place his religious idealism where it logically belonged left him a philosopher strangely incomplete. But, in the designs of Divine Providence, he may have played a singularly valuable role in the drama of our time.

Santayana would have felt at home in Plato's Academy, and if we are to hope for our civilization at all we must believe that the triumph of activism and utilitarianism will never be so complete that the classically detached and intellectually disinterested man will have no lesson to teach the future.

George Santayana's life reminds us of things which, if we forget, we are lost. His example was incomplete, but within its sphere it was unparalleled in its magnificence. We must now hope that there awaits him, for all eternity, the contemplation face-to-face of that Reality which, as an ideal, he loved so long. May perpetual light shine upon him.

## PAST IMPERFECT

**M**R. Walter Lippmann has suggested a simple test for voters and partisan orators in the heat of this campaign. The air is clogged with bitter charges and counter-charges about our diplomatic, political and military mistakes during the past few years. Mr. Lippmann has suggested a procedure that could conceivably reintroduce humility and perhaps even a measure of charity into our debates.

It is a simple test question Mr. Lippmann has in mind: What was my position at the time? Did I talk *then* as I talk *now*? Did I exercise my own influence to sway official opinion in the direction of what I now know to be an errant path?

Such a test, of course, will not undo mistakes, but it will often show that those who cry longest and loudest now, who are most indignant about certain political and military steps taken in the past, who wax most furious about the "incompetence" responsible for these mistakes and sometimes even hint darkly that they can be explained only in conspiratorial terms, were themselves, at the time the mistakes were made, in full agreement.

There are examples at every hand, but a very clear one—because almost all of us were directly concerned—was our rapid demobilization after the victory of 1945. In the light of subsequent events, we know now that it was a mistake to dissolve our military power so quickly. But how many said so at the time? How many editorial writers, orators, politicians, office-holders were clearly opposed to demobilization? It was a question which almost every family in the United States—even those not normally politically minded—gave thought to, since almost every family had some representation in the Armed Services.

In the 1944 campaign, demobilization was a Republican issue. The candidate, Mr. Dewey, went around charging that his opponent, Mr. Roosevelt, was intent on keeping millions of men under arms indefinitely because he knew there would be no jobs for them.

In that campaign, the parties vied with one another in promising "our boys" speedy release from the service. To suggest otherwise at the time would certainly have spelled political suicide.

If one was in the service, he remembers the mood of the soldiers. They wanted out, no ifs, ands or buts about it. And their families at home were in full agreement.

In Europe, after the victory, there were the "GI Revolts," so-called—soldiers meeting in unauthorized formations, carrying "We want to go home!" signs. The movement was largely sparked by Communists, as almost everyone knew, still it gained a sympathetic press in this country.

When, in October, 1945, George Marshall issued his

regular Biennial Report to the Secretary of War, advocating compulsory military training, the General's concern for our military strength was widely dismissed as "habit-thinking."

The next month, incidentally, November, 1945, another General told the House Military Affairs Committee: "Nothing guides Russian policy so much as a desire for friendship with the United States." That General was the present candidate, Mr. Eisenhower, who recently said, like a man whose advice was ignored, that we are fighting in Korea today because the American Government grossly underestimated the Soviet threat and allowed America to become weak.

The year 1945 is not so long ago. It shouldn't be too hard for us to remember the American mood at the time. Actually we were at war for less than four years, but the four years seemed to those in the service and their relatives back home an eternity. The first great fruit of victory, it seemed to all of us, should be the great return—men returned to their wives, their sweethearts, their anxious parents. Pressure was put on the politicians, the army, the molders of opinion—bring the boys back! Republican politicians played on the theme for all it was worth. The idea was cultivated that if your son or husband or sweetheart wasn't home it was because of Administration fumbling and stumbling.

I can't remember any Republican criticism of the President and the Administration for moving too quickly on demobilization; rather the criticism was on the opposite score—they weren't moving fast enough. I remember bitter and widespread criticism of the Army's point system—but not because the system let too many men out too soon, but because it didn't let enough men out soon enough.

All of this, as we see it now, was a mistake. But responsibility for it rests on all of us. Certainly, given the tensions, the general mood, the hopes and promise of the day, it was an understandable mistake, however disastrous. Shall we now accuse one another, berate one another—like Adam and Eve in the garden—because we are all burdened with the same guilt?

We were foolish and short-sighted then. The frightening thing is that some of the same people who were ready to exploit the mood of the people then for their own advantage—putting the blame on the Administration for the fact that our demobilization wasn't quick enough—are just as ready now to saddle the same President with full responsibility for our too-hasty demobilization. It is part of the irony that one of the few men who said "Go slow!"—I mean General Marshall—is now openly accused of leading America to a conscious "Retreat from Victory."

JOHN COGLEY.

# Strangers in the City

"PREJUDICE AGAINST THE PUERTO RICANS RUNS HIGH,  
FANNED PERIODICALLY BY SENSATIONAL NEWSPAPER STORIES"

JAMES O'GARA

FIFTEEN or twenty years ago, millions of Americans knew the look of poverty. To those on relief and to the men in the breadlines, poverty was almost part of the human condition, as familiar as the creases in an old shoe. Today, for most Americans, those memories are long past, and if the face of poverty, once known, is never completely forgotten, at least its sharp details are by now safely obscured by layer upon layer of happier memories.

But not for the Puerto Rican migrants in New York. For most of them, poverty is one of the facts of life, nagging, persistent, and hard to bear. What they know is not the Lady Poverty beloved by the saints, but a cruel and ugly taskmaster. Apprenticed in her service by a bond almost impossible to break, thousands of Puerto Ricans in New York live out their lives quietly, known to their fellow citizens largely through eye-catching newspaper stories, damned by a sensationalism which feeds on an accumulation of myths and folklore.

Accurate figures on the number of Puerto Ricans in New York are not easily come by. Although often treated as foreigners, Puerto Ricans are in fact American citizens, and they have just as much right to come to New York as New Yorkers have to move to New Jersey, or Hoosiers to move to Illinois. New York is some eight hours away by plane, the fare for a bucket-seat in a converted Army transport averages less than \$50, and every day, week in and week out, the planes set down at various airports in the New York area, filled with Puerto Ricans eager for a new life.

The sight of this stream of migrants has produced some wild speculations on the total number of Puerto Ricans in the New York area. Some estimates have gone as high as seven hundred thousand, but this figure seems clearly exaggerated. Migration has been heavy since World War II, and there has undoubtedly been a sharp increase from the prewar figure of less than one hundred thousand, but most astronomical estimates probably stem from the popular fear that the Puerto Ricans are "spreading all over" and will soon "take over" the entire city.

Such forebodings provide a more accurate guide to xenophobia than to the rate of population growth.

Even if they wanted to, it would be impossible for the Puerto Ricans to "take over" New York. In any country, only a small percentage ever wants to migrate, and the entire population of Puerto Rico is only about one-quarter that of New York City. Despite the fact that better than eighty per cent of the Puerto Ricans who come to the U.S. stay in New York, the number in the city today probably amounts to no more than three hundred and fifty or four hundred thousand.

ONCE dumped down on a New York sidewalk, flanked by cheap suitcases and cardboard boxes, the Puerto Rican migrant is confronted by immediate problems similar to those which faced most immigrants to this country. No pictures could prepare him for the towering steel and concrete forest of Manhattan, and as he stares he hears a constant babble of words in a language not his own.

Many new arrivals speak very little English, and even those who learned the language well in the island schools take some time to catch on to American idioms and the rhythm of the spoken language. In this situation, the Puerto Rican does what newcomers to this country have always done: he seeks out his own kind. As a result of this homing instinct, New York is dotted with Puerto Rican colonies, on the lower East Side, in the Bronx and Brooklyn.

If the newly arrived Puerto Rican has relatives here, he is almost certain of a place to stay until he gets established. The Puerto Rican has a strong sense of family loyalty, and no matter how crowded he may be, he will make room for one more relative with no place else to go. This generosity is often maddening to landlords, but as a kind of poor man's social security, it works out well for the new arrival.

The most crowded and probably the poorest of all the Puerto Rican settlements in New York is located in East (or Spanish) Harlem. For thousands of Puerto Ricans in New York, this is their first home. Here, where the concentration of Puerto Ricans is heavy, the alien sights of a strange land are disguised by the Spanish names and phrases on stores and signs, and

the harsh sounds of an unfamiliar tongue are forgotten in the soothing cadences of the native language.

Even for the newly arrived, it is hard to be lonely in Spanish Harlem. The streets are crowded all day and most of the night, not so much from choice as from necessity; East Harlem is one of the most congested areas in the world. The buildings sag with age, and the hallways have an omnipresent odor, compounded of accumulated dirt, old plaster, and too many years of human occupancy, which no amount of scrubbing will ever wash away.

Here and there throughout the area are abandoned and empty buildings, windows gaping, plumbing gone, store-fronts boarded up. These stand as mute witnesses to the reason few tenants care to complain when landlords fail to carry out needed repairs; protests by tenants might call official attention to the fact that many of the buildings are unfit for human beings and lead to complete condemnation. Apartments are hard to get in East Harlem, and for this reason, if no other, most Puerto Ricans keep their complaints to themselves.

But for this enforced silence, the Puerto Rican in East Harlem pays a heavy price. Old, dilapidated, and inadequately supplied with heat, light and plumbing facilities, under the most favorable circumstances few of these buildings would be bargains. Crowded as they are, they are tolerable only because it is well nigh impossible to find anywhere else to go. Dollar for dollar, in view of what they receive in return, tenants in such areas pay the highest rent in the city.

This area is part of the old stamping-grounds of former Congressman Vito Marcantonio, and the American Labor Party continues to be active in the neighborhood. Over the years, many of Marcantonio's most devoted admirers have been Puerto Ricans, and the reason for this support can be found any day in his office, the doors of which are always open to those in trouble. Outsiders frequently point out the close resemblance between Marcantonio's statements and voting record and the Communist party line, but in election after election he kept right on rolling up votes cast by the people whose cause he championed.

In the end, the only way Marcantonio was defeated was by a coalition, formed when the other parties agreed to shelve partisan rivalry and back only one candidate in the district. As a result of this maneuver, Marcantonio was at least temporarily retired from Congress. But he is a long way from calling a halt to his political career, and conditions in the neighborhood, plus Marcantonio's willingness to put up a good, loud fight for his constituents, may still return him to Congress on another day.

ONCE settled in New York, the Puerto Rican takes the traditional place of the immigrant at the bot-

tom of the economic ladder. Unless he has special skills, he is strictly limited in the kind of job open to him. Most newly arrived migrants have no such skills, and they end up washing dishes, working in laundries, packing cookies, making candy, or working as general laborers. Puerto Rican women fare a little better. Fine sewing is a part of their Spanish heritage, and for many of them this skill opens the door to quick employment in New York's garment factories.

Accustomed to a more leisurely pace, the Puerto Rican migrant is plunged overnight into a civilization where the tempo seems almost frantic. In the space of a few hours he finds himself in a world where the accent is on the time clock, catching that subway, making that train, being on time, never missing work. The transition between the two cultures is not easily made, and in his new life the Puerto Rican often faces problems as great or greater than any immigrant.

One advantage the Puerto Rican enjoys over early immigrant groups is the number of agencies and organizations available to help him. The Puerto Rican government maintains offices in New York, and there is a special Mayor's Committee for the Puerto Ricans. The welfare departments of city and state are available for emergency assistance, the Board of Education tries to anticipate the particular needs of Puerto Rican children, and well-established unions already exist to fight for better wages and decent working conditions.

Most Puerto Rican migrants are Catholic, and the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York is active among them. Formal training in religion, however, is very weak among Puerto Ricans, due in large part to a shortage of priests on the island, where there are less than three hundred priests for more than two million people. Until 1898, when the island passed from Spanish to American hands, Puerto Rico was, at least nominally, one hundred per cent Catholic. Today, probably fifteen or twenty per cent of the population is Protestant, and in the Puerto Rican neighborhoods of New York there are more than one hundred Protestant churches intended for the Spanish-speaking.

PREJUDICE against the Puerto Ricans in New York runs high, fanned periodically by sensational newspaper stories, and this hurts the migrants' chances for better jobs and decent housing. The Puerto Ricans are called dirty, ignorant, and clannish, and people say darkly that they will never make good citizens. They are accused of causing crime waves, and many citizens manage to sound as if no other group in the population had any problem with juvenile delinquency that was even comparable.

Ironically enough, the Puerto Rican migrant is often forced to live in a blighted area like East Harlem, then blamed for conditions there, as if he had brought them

with him. On the bottom rung of the economic ladder, he makes around \$30 a week on jobs where he is subject to seasonal lay-offs. But when he has to get some kind of emergency assistance, the migrant is accused of coming to New York for the sole purpose of going on relief.

On this score, what is happening to the Puerto Rican duplicates almost exactly the history of the early immigrant groups. Like the Irish, Poles and Italians, he is being accused of nearly every crime under the sun. What the Puerto Rican needs is a fair chance to find himself in an unfamiliar world; what he actually meets is popular resentment of his presence on almost every side. If it were not so tragic, there would be something almost humorous in what is happening. In New York, pre-eminently the gateway to the New World, the children of the earlier immigrants are giving the newcomers treatment similar to that once suffered by their own fathers.

If it were not for one factor, it might be possible to take the long view and try to shrug the whole thing off. Other newcomers survived much the same testing and came through triumphantly. The charges made at the height of the Irish immigration read almost exactly like those made today against the Puerto Ricans, and in the light of the present they are clearly ridiculous. But the Puerto Ricans have a special problem the Irish did not have to face: the American attitude on race.

Puerto Ricans represent three racial strains, Spanish, Indian and Negro, and they range in color from very fair to black. About two-thirds are white, although a higher percentage of non-whites congregate in areas like East Harlem, whereas whites have a better chance at housing elsewhere.



Although Puerto Ricans are not unconscious of racial differences, race is not stressed on the island the way it is here. But once in this country, the non-white Puerto Rican runs head-on into the economic and social disabilities which handicap the American Negro. Many Americans think of all Puerto Ricans as "colored"; as a result, even the white Puerto Rican is likely to discover that in the popular mind he is identified with the non-whites.

The big hope of the Puerto Rican lies in receiving the acceptance now enjoyed by earlier immigrant groups. But after the Puerto Rican sees what severe handicaps attach to being a Negro in this country, he becomes understandably anxious to keep his own native identity in order to avoid such penalties. Many Puerto Ricans therefore cling to Latin ways, including the use of Spanish for everyday needs, and assimilation into the mainstream of American life is made that much more difficult.

**I**N view of the tremendous handicaps suffered here by the Puerto Rican, many people find it hard to understand why he comes to the continental United States. The answer is not too hard to discover.

Puerto Rico itself is desperately poor. Since the U. S. took it over and introduced modern medical and sanitary methods, the death rate has declined sharply, and as a result the population has actually doubled. Largely non-industrial, the island is chiefly dependent on one crop, sugar, and like most one-crop economies, that of Puerto Rico is shaky.

In recent years, decisive action to improve the island's economic condition has been initiated. Efforts are under way to diversify agriculture and improve methods of cultivation, as well as to spread ownership of land, raise productivity and attract new industries to the island. Going hand in hand with these measures have been attempts to raise wages and improve housing. But achievement of these goals remains a long way in the future. In the meantime, the population runs well over six hundred per square mile, on an island only thirty-five miles wide by one hundred long. For the U. S. to have a comparable population density, it is commonly pointed out, the entire population of the world would have to live here.

For Puerto Rico, this adds up to a constant pressure of population on an inadequate economy, and poverty on a scale difficult for Americans here to imagine. Even those Puerto Ricans who live in the most crowded spot of all, East Harlem, still feel they are better off here than on their native island. To one who has seen East Harlem, it is hard to decide whether the way so many Puerto Ricans are forced to live here, or the fact that they would be even worse off at home, constitutes the more damning indictment.

# The Bitter Bread of Idleness

**A**MERICANS have a keen sense for concrete realities, for hard facts and cold figures. Perhaps it is because of this that Italian unemployment has been one of the most irritating postwar problems American experts have had to cope with. It is one which continues to be irritating, and apparently insoluble, in spite of American dollar aid and the good will shown by the Italian authorities. The most irritating fact of all is not so much that unemployment has not been reduced, and therefore goes on breeding Communism, but rather that it seems somehow refractory to the American sense for facts and figures, refractory to a point that suspicions have arisen that somehow there must be an organized racket behind it.

If one sticks to facts and figures the dilemma is clear enough. A worker who does not earn anything and does not receive aid from the government is unable to buy any food, and is bound to starve. If he has, at the same time, a family depending on his earnings, the family too will starve. All that is obvious. On the other hand it has been established through repeated field surveys that the Italian unemployed are and remain an apparently constant number of roughly two million people. Only one tenth of them, as a specially privileged group, receive the ridiculously low government subsidy of thirty seven cents a day, and this only during the first six months of unemployment. After six months without employment, a man must consider himself as one of the anonymous two million pariahs, who logically ought to starve and die out.

But here the irritating fact comes in that according to repeated medical tests, they are practically without exception not only still alive but not even to a larger degree undernourished. Of course, many of them could be better fed, but their health is not in serious danger now. These findings are corroborated by the current experience of Italian doctors in slum districts. How do these people manage to live? Nothing is wrong with the facts and figures, and even Italians are unable to survive on less calories than other human beings.

The other findings concerning Italian unemployment are not particularly helpful in the search for a key to the problem. If in other countries "normal" unemployment is three per cent, the proportion in Italy is as high as ten per cent. But all the efforts so far have only annually reduced the number of the unemployed by a

number corresponding to the roughly two hundred thousand new workers thrown on the market as a result of the natural growth of the population. Thus the hard core of two million unemployed remains as a chronic disease.

The fact that it is extremely difficult in Italy to draw a sharp line between the employed and the unemployed does not make it easier, because very many of the "employed" work on only a part time basis. Very many Italian enterprises still employ more workers than they need as a result of the well-organized Communist agitations and pressure against any form of discharge, and thus the cost of production is increased and the markets reduced. Italy is consequently unable to benefit from her cheap labor, which could have been a big asset in international competition. Exactly as poverty seems to create more poverty, much unemployment seems to have the paralyzing effect of creating more unemployment among the Italians.

**A**LL this does not solve the mystery of the unemployed who are not even undernourished. The Italian government has therefore made an all out effort to discover the reasons for the "pathological" Italian unemployment. The large commission entrusted with the inquiry includes representatives of even the mighty Communist trade union, the CGIL, or Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro. The inclusion of the Communists aims at neutralizing any future Communist criticism of the methods used by the commission. At the same time, the Communists have proved to be very use-



ful experts on unemployment. Not only are the unemployed from all over Italy interviewed, but also both small and large employers and anybody else in a position to throw light on the problem. The first results are now available and are very interesting indeed.

Most of the unemployed waiting their turn to be questioned appear eager, hoping that it might lead to a job somehow. Most of them are young or middle-aged. There are a number of women and intellectuals. Some are obviously demoralized by their vain hunting for jobs, some are married with large families to support, and some have been without work ever since the end of the war. But none of them looks undernourished and several of them seem downright flourishing. Again the question arises: how is it possible? Why don't they starve? What keeps them going?

First of all: are they really unemployed? The members of the commission are naturally asking this question and some of the replies are forwarded to the police for checking. But it appears that the absolute majority is really unemployed, without even a part time job. Many of them when asked how they carry on use an Italian expression which cannot be translated, but which means: I am trying in spite of it all to eke out a living.

This boils down to a number of odd jobs, some of them hardly believable, which nobody in a country with a high standard of living would think of, but which enables them to earn a small amount of money. One of them for instance collects edible snails in the fields outside the town, which makes it possible for him during certain periods to make as much as forty-five cents a day. Another scrapes old posters from the walls and sells the paper. In a very realistic Italian film, which has recently won an international prize, an unemployed man runs alongside horsecars and pushes them up a particularly steep hill, receiving in return a small part of the coachmen's meager earnings. Mostly these jobs are real rope-dancer tricks, some showing an incredible ingenuity, but none of them enables a man to cover even a fraction of the minimum necessary to provide for himself, still less for a large family.

The question how these people manage to avoid starvation is still there, without reply. Who pays the three hundred and sixty five million dollars a year, which is the cost, according to cautious calculations, which is necessary to feed, clothe and lodge them? The surprising answer, which emerges from the findings of the commission is: the others, the ninety per cent more or less employed. Among them, first of all, their families, and this reveals a quite peculiar aspect of Latin mentality. It is well known that Italians are very much attached to the family. Furthermore, they seem to be exceptionally generous towards any fellow human beings in need of help. Maybe it is necessary to have been unhappy to understand unhappiness and to have been poor to understand misery.

If one makes the calculation that for every Italian unemployed there are nine employed, this means that these nine people support the unemployed and his wife and children, if he has any, for any length of time, as the most natural thing in the world. Cousins, brothers-in-law, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews, even godparents, neighbors and friends participate, all in order to help the unemployed. At the same time, it is understood that if one of them should lose his job and the unemployed get one, the roles should be reversed. It is a sort of primitive family insurance and that is why they do not starve and are not even undernourished. Undoubtedly this is an admirable example of human solidarity, truly Christian in its essence, —naturaliter christiana—, in spite of the Marxist faith of most of these people. And maybe that is why this solidarity is hard to measure in statistics and calories or even in dollars.

**B**UT an orderly Western mind might object to this as undemocratic and too primitive, and suggest taxation instead, so that the whole nation, including the rich, should carry the weight of the unemployed. Theoretically, this would be a more just solution, but experience has shown clearly enough that the individualistic Latin mentality would revolt against it, as an intolerable interference by the traditional arch-enemy: the bureaucratic State. The employed Italian workers have shown that they prefer to pay more for an unemployed brother or nephew, and be able to see for themselves that the help is appreciated and useful, than to pay less in taxes intended as subsidies for the unemployed taken as a whole. For them money paid in taxes is just thrown away into the jaws of the insatiable State-Moloch, with no guarantee to the taxpayer that the money is used properly. The very word taxation has something merciless, inhuman and lifelong about it, whereas sacrifices made for the unemployed nephew cease as soon as he gets a job. . . .

Some of the beggars left savings in their mattresses when they died. An Italian journalist disguised as a beggar has made the interesting discovery that the people most generous are not the financially comfortable Italians but the working class, and particularly the women. The regularity and the number of their alms enables the beggar to live at least as well, or as badly, as the unemployed.

Thus even the beggars are included in the same warm human solidarity. They too prefer to be free and uncompromising individualists—free to scratch themselves where they like, free to eat when and where they like, and free to sleep when and where they like—rather than to sell this freedom to what they consider the common enemy, the State.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

# Mr. Lewis Makes the Gesture

**A**BE RASKIN had a good line in the N. Y. *Times* of Sept. 21. He wrote: "The dove of labor peace made a jet-propelled flight through the grand ballroom of the Commodore Hotel on the opening day of the AFL convention last Monday, but the eight hundred delegates were so busy telling the entries in the White House handicap how to run that they never knew the elusive bird was there."

The reference was to an exchange between William Green, president of the AFL, and John L. Lewis, the lonesome miner. Lewis has been in and out of the AFL twice and in and out of the CIO once, but in recent years he has made a specialty of calling upon both AFL and CIO to get together.

Green read one of these statements to the AFL convention and then called the author "the great disrupter, the great divider, John L. Lewis." Ordinarily the Mine Workers' president, when insulted by Green, would not hesitate for a second to rear back and let him have one between the eyes. Once he said of the AFL president: "I have examined the inside of Mr. Green's head at length and I can assure you that there is nothing there." But on this occasion Lewis just wired back a telegram with the deadpan suggestion that the federation call a conference of AFL, CIO and independent unions to draw up a plan for immediate unification which, he said, "could easily be completed and become effective by October 15."

This is about the most unreal, dreamlike statement that Lewis has made in a lifetime of rhetoric. The chances of such a thing coming to pass by October 15, 1953, are slight enough. As it was, his words sank without a trace in the Commodore ballroom and the delegates went back to the far more absorbing job of getting ready to endorse Adlai Stevenson.

**T**HERE was nothing unreal or dreamlike about the way the old master, Mr. Eyebrows, maneuvered his miners a few days later to a \$9.50 a week increase plus another 10¢ a ton for the union's welfare fund. This brings a soft coal miner's weekly pay to \$91.25, which isn't bad, although I do not mean to suggest that it is too much for the dirty and dangerous work that he has to do. It may be too much for the Wage Stabilization Board to reconcile with Regulations six and

eight, which permit an increase that is 4.5% less than the one yielded by the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association. But that is a larger problem, which involves the question of how to get effective wage control without effective price control, and I am not going into it here except to raise the question.

What interests me is John L. Lewis and why he acts the way he does. And I don't mean in getting as big an increase as he can for his men. That is perfectly normal behavior in a labor leader. I mean in respect to these labor unity statements. Is it possible that he means them seriously?

Lewis is seventy-two now. Not as old as Green, but still old. He hasn't mellowed perceptibly. He still seems to combine great ability, great ambition and a great blindness about the effect he produces on other people.

Most of us can remember when John L. was so convinced that his support would throw the 1940 election to Willkie that he told the workers that if Roosevelt won he would resign as president of the CIO. I wouldn't be at all surprised if Lewis really took the subsequent defeat of Willkie as a vote of no-confidence in himself. But if so, it didn't diminish his own store of confidence in himself.

Over the years, the number of labor leaders who revere Lewis has steadily diminished and the number who hate and fear him has just as steadily increased. And yet the old man still seems to think that he could serve as a rallying point for a reunion of AFL and CIO. Which proves again that man's capacity for self-delusion is almost without limit.

But what a force for good he might have been if God and himself had only altered his personality somewhat! Suppose that he had remained as president of the CIO and retained the loyalty and friendship of Philip Murray and other CIO leaders. I think that with the Mine Workers' money and members and his own ability they might have built the CIO to a position of at least numerical equality with the AFL. This would have simplified the problem of labor unity one hundred per cent.

Suppose we now had a united labor movement of fifteen million strong. Suppose that the solidity and prestige of the AFL were nicely tempered with the greater militancy and idealism of the CIO. Having supposed that, we would probably have to revise our previous supposition and add another million or two workers to the labor movement on the strength of the far more effective organizing campaign that the combined federation could put in the field.

Supposing that, I don't think we would have to worry about the chances of electing Stevenson and a Congress that would show a reasonable sensitivity to the demands of social justice.

But Lewis wasn't that kind of man, so the idea is

almost as unreal and dreamlike as his own hope that the AFL and CIO could be wedded by himself by October 15.

AND yet the hope for labor unity is neither unreal nor dreamlike. It is a hope that lingers in the hearts and minds of millions of American workers and thousands of lesser union officials. And in the cities, and some states, it is a living reality in the United Labor Committees that are even now working in unison for the election of labor-endorsed candidates for political office. In my own industry there are many cities where AFL and CIO newspaper unions work closely together on the economic front, planning their bargaining strategy jointly and throwing their weight together when the time comes to put on the pressure. And the same is true in other industries.

This grass roots unity has paid off in benefits for all the workers. Those at the top do not see things in the same practical way because they are at the top. But I think it is only a question of time before the real faith of those at the bottom sifts upward to those at the top.

And, in fact, that is already happening. With two steps forward and one step backward, we have seen, over the past few years, a gradual growing together of AFL and CIO. For a year or more they worked together in Washington, at the top, on the political and legislative front. Then the AFL broke it up. The whole thing was still too obvious and right for some of the executive council members to grasp.

But now the AFL has gone the whole hog with the CIO on political action. This should bring them closer again. As the younger leaders go onward and upward their influence at the top will accelerate the trend toward both functional unity, the CIO idea, and organic unity, the AFL idea.

So the hope of Lewis, the lonesome miner, is not entirely without foundation. I think it will survive even his endorsement.

And before we leave the man until another coal crisis rolls around, I want to say something nice about him. A few days ago I was talking with a priest friend whose work is with the blind, and particularly with the problem of rehabilitation. He said that John L. Lewis and the Mine Workers, through that welfare fund whose payments have just been increased from thirty to forty cents a ton, have been doing some magnificent pioneering in the field of rehabilitation of blinded miners.

Lewis may overestimate the way the average American—even the average labor leader—feels about him. But I think that most of us underestimate the way the average miner feels about him. To the man in the coal shaft he is still “the great John L.”

JOHN C. CORT.

# THE STAGE

## MR. PICKWICK

MR. STANLEY YOUNG has fashioned his arrangement of “The Pickwick Papers” not out of Dickens’ rich comic substance, but rather out of the extravagant display of eccentricity and detail which is one of that novelist’s chief glories. In compressing so vast a chronicle to theatrical proportions, Mr. Young has, I am sure, followed the only logical course open to him. I am equally convinced that, with all his quantity of wit and intelligence and good will, he has acted as *agent provocateur* in a gross dramatic misunderstanding. We are prepared for the alteration (even the diminution) of a singular and acknowledged masterpiece: we do not anticipate its extinction. Opulence of production and a distinguished text have here advanced the season not a whit; indeed, “Mr. Pickwick” seems to me a failure quite as absolute, thoroughly as desperate and involuntary, as that of last week’s tedious little entry.

One wonders, at first, why. Mr. Young is a writer of considerable skill and sensibility, who would surely concede to no one in warmth of feeling and affection for his master. For the most part, he has allowed Dickens to speak for himself, and there is pleasure in hearing language which makes more than the elementary demands. He has a lively sense, too, this adapter, of the real splendor of the private Dickens world, and he gives us, in a variety of pose and attitude, many of its populous inhabitants.

Here is Pickwick, knight-errant of the middle classes, sallying forth on his voyage of discovery amid all the wonder of the wide world. And here are the luminaries he draws in his wake: Sam and Tony Weller, engaged in their perpetual humane colloquies, which make a kind of paradise of the kitchen and the back stairs; Mrs. Leo Hunter, poetess of “The Sylvan Echo” (“You have met, sir, with my ‘Ode to an Expiring Frog’ ”?); Miss Rachael Wardle, with her collection of moths (but only day moths, for a maiden lady never went out at night) and Buzfuz the lawyer, stealthily tracking down the secret of “chops and tomato sauce.” They are all here, and yet they are not: everything is awry, slightly off-key; there are no echoes, no reverberations. An impossible fracture—between what we are seeing, hearing, and what we remember as having nourished us with delight—finally leaves the play with its disastrous margin for disenchantment.

What is wanting, of course, is what James called “a really grasping imagination,” something which Dickens had, perhaps, to excess. He could take these people, charge them out of his own inexhaustible vitality, and set them moving, as Chesterton points out, in a kind of

"perpetual summer of being themselves." It is only the mind that can contain such largeness; on the stage at the Plymouth, how small and undistinguished they seem—a random collection of humours, not a company of the immortals. And with so much magnitude of spirit gone, the novel's special charm—its innocence and lyricism, that peculiar sense "as of the Gods gone wandering in England"—rapidly dissolves. *Of course* Mr. Young cannot convey it; it is one of the glories of our literature. He would have to be a "genius;" we are all so much infinitely the less.

I think though—even conceding the limitations inherent in such an enterprise—that a more imaginative attempt might have been made to capture the Dickens flavor. Direction could have accomplished this, but Mr. John Burrell's is inexcusably static: he dissipates the evening in a series of tedious *longueurs*, and never really organizes the performance about any formal dramatic center.

Quite conceivably, too, Mr. Burrell is responsible for the air of misplaced gentility which envelops so much of the action. If so, he is serving Dickens ill. It is only fair to point out, however, that he is enthusiastically assisted in misreading the novelist by a large and uneven cast. I have rarely seen professional competence so poorly displayed. George Howe's Pickwick is a genial caricature, but of Dickens' fabulous gull, the greenhorn who is always being "taken in" and who finally—in Chesterton's phrase—"with torches and trumpets, like a guest . . . is taken in by Life," there is nothing. Estelle Winwood, a brilliant actress, makes much of her expiring frog, and there are more or less accurate apprehensions of Dickens from Louis Hector (Tony Weller), Nigel Green (Jingle), and Basil Howes (Mr. Stiggins). I was grateful, too, for C. K. Alexander's unhonored Fat Boy, a wonderful visual creation which suggests a bloated version of one of Charles Addams' happy little monsters.

It is surely presumptuous to suggest to Mr. Young and the venerable Playwrights' Company that they are implicated in a mistake, yet I cannot see what other conclusion is open. "Mr. Pickwick" enhances neither prose fiction nor the dramatic repertoire; it is, properly speaking, not literature at all, but an act of piety. What is supremely ironic in this gesture is how it diminishes the stature of the man to whom it is addressed. "It is difficult to believe," as Leon Edel once wrote of the dead Joyce, "that so great a man could be brought to so little space." (*At the Plymouth*)

RICHARD HAYES.

#### COMING BOOK NUMBERS OF THE COMMONWEAL

Fall Books ..... October 24  
Children's Books ..... November 21  
Christmas Books ..... December 5

## OF NOTE

### THE RESTORATION OF WORK

THE current issue of *Blackfriars*, English Dominican monthly, (34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W. C. 1), is primarily concerned with Social Services. The following is an excerpt from an article on "Education and Industry," written by Patricia Hall, who is a personnel and industrial relations adviser.

In the last few years, many have grasped the truth that the foreman is the first line of management. Just as I believe that unless we restore the human family to its primary place in society we are doomed as a civilization, so I know that if we restore the first-row leader to his rightful position and help him to carry his authority and responsibilities in the best way, we shall inevitably get men of goodwill in industry, to whom (and not to the intelligent or to the born organisers) was peace once promised. If we really treated the foreman, the office and laboratory supervisor and the sales team leader as the first line of management, industry would be very different from what it is. An American foreman put it vividly: "We foremen now are nothing but carrier pigeons, carrying messages from workers to offices and from managers and staff departments to workers. We are never allowed to make one darned decision today."

Catholics ought to be, but are not, the leaders in this great upsurge of interest in education in industry. By the grace of God, they possess the fullest knowledge of the way human life must be lived if men are to fulfil God's purpose. They have a fully worked out and coherent philosophy of life, applicable to every phase and department of living and of work, a philosophy capable of opposing materialistic philosophy with its false teaching about truth, and of showing up its ultimate emptiness.

If we fail to think out these principles clearly and their bearing in every department of our lives, we shall be abetting the devil in his struggle for the soul of the world. Now education in industry opens up for us a tremendous field of work, with great opportunities because so many of our countrymen in industry, whose instincts are on the side of the angels, are looking to us for leadership in the titanic fight now being waged by thorough-going materialists, to whom religion of any kind, and especially the Jewish and Christian beliefs, are the enemy of everything they see as progress.

The fundamental principle of all education and management is the absolute necessity for knowing the nature and purpose of human life. Our whole educational system at every level is suffering from

this lack, this error about, or complete indifference to, the right answers to the questions: "What is man?" and "What is man for?"

Another essential work is to deal with the widespread deterioration in the idea of truth, and so establish once again that truth and reality are something outside of us, something to which we must conform our minds and our actions. Without our realizing it, materialist assumptions have influenced even the thinking of Christians, yet many professed materialists are still influenced by the Christian thinking implicit in the civilization we love.

So it is that management studies and management training should recognize that the key question for all management is, "What is man?," that we must have a consistent philosophy of life if we are to lead our fellows rightly, and that the nature and source of authority needs to be fully discussed and studied. The fifty and more lectures that I heard last year in the U.S.A. given to managers on "The American Way of Life" ignored completely the nature of authority and could have conditioned the minds of those managers equally well for a Communist state! Mr. Whittaker Chamber's recently-published *Witness* has had a lively critical reception throughout the United States because he insists that belief in God and in an unchanging moral order is the only road to political salvation, or economic survival for that matter.

A year ago I was asked by an organizer of courses for managers whether I would outline "A Philosophy for Management" with a group of twenty senior managers. A few weeks later I was invited to take the same subject with forty foremen sent on a three-weeks course by their firms. Once again I briefly defined philosophy, as a common-sensical man or woman would see it, listed the principal philosophies we meet in the world today, and then touched briefly on the Christian principles and thinking that operate in four questions of importance to those in industry: selection and training, dealing with grievances, financing industry, and work study. They listened in silence and then flooded me with questions. The senior executive present, in thanking me, remarked: "We were sent here three weeks ago to study our jobs, I suppose, and we have all been wondering why our firm's money and our time have been wasted . . . till this afternoon—just before we leave—when I, at least, have seen for the first time my place and my duties in this world . . . and I can really see what management means."

After the family and the home, no sphere is more important today than that of industry and commerce, and no task more urgent than the proper education of all associated with them.

# Donne's Quest for Unity

MARTIN TURNELL

NEARLY all John Donne's critics have commented on the variety of mood of the *Songs and Sonets* and on the contrast between his secular and religious verse, but comparatively few of them have treated his work as a whole. There has, indeed, been fairly general agreement that Donne's achievement can be summed up in phrases like "a study in discord" or "a spirit in conflict" without anyone's pausing to consider whether there is any unity of purpose underlying the 'discord' and the 'conflict'. From this it is a short step to the assumption that the only unity his work possesses lies in its temper which was largely conditioned by the peculiar difficulties of the age in which he lived.

The time has come to examine some of these assumptions. It would of course be idle to pretend that his poetry possesses anything comparable to the architecture of *The Divine Comedy* or even of the *Fleurs du mal*. It cannot be claimed that its different parts were designed to fit into a particular framework, but on the other hand they are not mere collections of verse.

It therefore appears that there are two questions which might profitably be asked. Can we discover any single theme underlying the constant shift and change of mood in the *Songs and Sonets*? If so, is there any theme which is common to all his best work. I think that the answer to both questions is: Yes.

In the third "Satyre," written when Donne was a very young man, we find these lines:

On a huge hill,  
Cragged, and steep, Truth stands,  
and hee that will  
Reach her, about must, and about must goe;  
And what the hills suddennes resists,  
winne so;  
Yet strive so, that before age, deaths twilight,  
Thy Soule rest, for none can worke in that night.

This is one of the finest examples of Donne's verse. The slow laboring lines and the sinewy rhythms wonderfully convey the immense effort that must be made to reach truth. The great problem which dominates the whole of Donne's work—the love poetry as well as the religious poetry—is, as one critic has observed,

Mr. Turnell, author of "The Novel in France," is one of England's leading literary critics.

the old philosophical problem of the One and the Many; and it is this that gives it its tension and its sense of strain.

Donne does not deal in abstractions in the same way as the philosopher; he translates his problems into concrete terms and tries to find emotional equivalents for them. His poetry thus becomes an unending quest for what he calls 'soul's rest'; and this can only be achieved by discovering something permanent and unchanging behind the world of appearances. It may provisionally be labelled 'Truth,' but we must be prepared to find that it refers to a state of mind and is subjective.

WHEN we look into the *Songs and Sonets* we find that a number of closely connected themes are constantly recurring. One is the theme of the dualism of soul and body; another is the search for the perfect union between man and woman; and they are symbolized by the words 'spheare,' 'all' and 'one.' In the last three lines of "The Good-morrow" he states one of the conditions of this unity:

What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;  
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I  
Love so alike, that none doth slacken,  
none can dye.

In "The Extasie" he wrote:

When love, with one another so  
Interanimates two soules,  
That abler soule, which thence doth flow,  
Defects of lonelinesse controules.

The poet's aim is to reach through personal relations a unity which transcends them. In reading the *Songs and Sonets* we cannot help noticing that though many of the poems are addressed to a woman, we never see her; and we come to realize that in spite of his protestations, she is no more than an instrument through which he hopes to attain a personal and ultimately subjective unity.

It also transpires that his quest is one in which he is invariably thwarted. He is thwarted by woman's inconstancy, by separations, partings, betrayals and by the death or imagined death of one of the partners. He is frustrated, too, by the innate conviction that the perfect unity which he seeks is in the nature of things unattainable.

The more we read Donne, the more conscious we become that his dissatisfaction is something which is inherent in passion itself. The lover is driven on by an insatiable desire for unity through the sexual connection only to discover that the act of love leads not to wholeness, but to dispersal. This radical dissatisfaction is well expressed in a poem with a very meta-

physical title — "Lovers Infinitenesse." The poet is discussing whether he possesses all his mistress's love:

Yet I would not have all yet,  
He that hath all can have no more,  
And since my love doth every day admit  
New growth, thou shouldst have new rewards  
in store;  
Thou canst not every day give me thy heart,  
If thou canst give it, then thou never gavest it.

What he is saying here is that he does not want all her love because change and growth are really the laws of his being. The only perfection that he can imagine is a *static* perfection which leaves room for neither change nor activity; and this sort of perfection would be intolerable to him. This means that he is pursuing two things which exclude or contradict one another — a perfect union which would nevertheless leave room for change and growth. In other words, he is moving towards a goal which must by its nature remain just out of reach; and the only satisfaction that he can achieve lies precisely in never being completely satisfied.

The theme of non-satisfaction is fundamental to the *Songs and Sonets*. It is the one guarantee that the activity, with its tensions and frustrations, which is native to the poet, will be perpetually maintained. It assumes the form of a continual oscillation between the extremes represented by growth and decay, life and death. The movement of a poem like "The Sunne Rising" is one of growth and expansion and the poet insists on the beneficent effects of love; but in other poems he writes of the essential destructiveness of passion. In "The Canonization" we read:

We're Tapers too, and at our owne cost die . . .  
In *Loves Alchymie*:  
So, lovers dreame a rich and long delight,  
But get a winter-seeming summers night.

THE lesson of the *Songs and Sonets* is a clear one and the poet seems to have learned it. It is impossible to find satisfaction in promiscuity or for that matter in human love at all because of the contradiction which is inherent in its very nature. He married Anne More and looked elsewhere for the unity which eluded him.

"An Anatomie of the World," consisting of two "Anniversaries" written to commemorate the death of Elizabeth Drury which occurred in 1610, is the most important poem written during his married life. It occupies a special place in the canon of his work because it forms a bridge between the *Songs and Sonets* and other early poems and the *Divine Poems* which

were written after the death of his wife in 1617.

We find two sharply differing views of Donne in the writings of twentieth-century critics. One regards him as the last medieval, the other as the first of the moderns. The second view rests to a large extent on the famous passage on the 'new philosophy' in "The First Anniversary:"

And new Philosophy calls all in doubt,  
The Element of fire is quite put out . . .  
And freely men confesse that this world's spent,  
When in the Planets, and the Firmament  
They seeke so many new; then see that this  
Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies.  
'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone;  
All just supply, and all Relation.

It is tempting to establish parallels between the supposed ravages of the new astronomy and those of the physical sciences in our own time, but it is highly dangerous. The first thing that we should notice about the lines is their *tone*. It is not tragic, but one of humorous bewilderment. There is no sign of the panic or of the religious doubt which afflicted Victorian readers of Darwin and Huxley.

We must also remind ourselves of the circumstances in which the poem was written. Donne had undoubtedly gone through a period of genuine scepticism—a personal skepticism which had nothing to do with scientific discovery—at the time of his break with the Catholic Church.

When he wrote "The First Anniversary" he was a respectable married man and a believing Christian though we do not know to what extent he was formally attached to the Anglican Church. What is usually spoken of as his 'doubt' should rather be described as 'unrest'—an unrest caused partly by his attempt to recapture a vanished spiritual unity and partly by his attempt to discover which, if any, of the contending religious factions was the true Church.

The poem therefore belongs to an intermediate phase of his experience. It is a sort of intellectual inventory of the age. When he looked round him he saw warring sects, conflicting philosophies and contradictory theories of the universe. The poem is rather like a kaleidoscope. The brightly colored pieces revolve and jostle one another in the most diverting fashion, but there is no pattern. For this reason the words "'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone," cannot be taken quite at their face value; but they do point to a deeper consciousness on the part of the poet that unity has been lost and that nothing has taken its place.

**I**N April, 1615, about fifteen months after his ordination as an Anglican clergyman, Donne wrote a

letter to his friend Sir Henry Goodere in which these words occur:

You shall seldome see a Coyne, upon which the stamp were removed, though to imprint it better, but that it looks awry and squint. And so, for the most part, do mindes which have received divers impressions. I will not, nor need to you, compare the Religions. The channels of Gods mercies run through both fields; and they are sister teats of his graces, yet both diseased and infected, but not both alike.

This is clearly the letter of a man who was very far from being at ease in his new faith. There is very considerable personal feeling behind the "Coyne, upon which the stamp were removed" and which "looks awry and squint." Donne had Catholicism in his blood and he found it far from easy to throw off the inherited feelings and habits of mind of his ancestors.

He makes no attempt to claim that the Established Church is the one true Church. On the contrary, he finds satisfaction in emphasizing that all churches are 'diseased and infected,' comparing them to 'teats' which feed the believer with the 'milk' of impure doctrine. The same feeling of uncertainty is apparent in Number XVIII of the *Holy Sonets* which was probably written when he had been a clergyman for three years:

Show me deare Christ, thy Spouse, so bright and clear.

What! is it She, which on the other shore  
Goes richly painted? or which rob'd and tore  
Laments and mournes in Germany and here?  
Sleepes she a thousand, then peeps up one yeare?  
Is she selfe truth and errs? now new, now outwore?  
Doth she, and did she, and shall she evermore  
On one, on seaven, or on no hill appeare?  
Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights  
First travaile we to seeke and then make Love?  
Betray kind husband thy spouse to our sights,  
And let myne amorous soule court they mild

Dove,

Who is most trew, and pleasing to thee, then  
When she 'is embrac'd and open to most men.

The sonnet is not among Donne's main achievements, but it is an important document. When we first read it we have the impression that it strikes a deeper note than the letter to Sir Henry Goodere and that he is tragically conscious of being even further from his goal than in his unregenerate youth. In the letter he appeared to accept the view that there was no such thing as the one true Church. The most you could aim at was to choose the least corrupt, though in doing so you might do considerable violence to yourself and emerge 'awry and squint.' The sonnet accepts the hy-

pothesis that one of the churches may be the Spouse of Christ, but we may wonder whether Donne was altogether sincere when he wrote:

"Betray kind husband thy spouse to our sights."

The tone of the last six lines with the 'adventuring knights' and the comparison between the Spouse and the mistress who is 'embrac'd and open to most men' recalls the tone of his lighter, more cynical pieces.

It is not the voice of a man who really wants to discover that one of the churches is the Spouse or who is seriously prepared for another change of allegiance. On the contrary, the charm of the 'mild Dove' depends on the fact that she is no more than a hypothesis—a goal which lies, tantalizingly, just out of reach, enabling the poet to enjoy the chase and to remain unsatisfied.

This leads to a further conclusion. Whatever its poetic merit, the sonnet is a remarkable transposition into religious terms not only of the problem, but also of the setting of the *Songs and Sonets*. The Spouse

replaces the mistress—I am using the word in its respectable seventeenth-century sense—and the churches replace the 'inconstant' woman of a poem like "The Indifferent." Their functions are the same. The poet thinks that union with the Spouse will bring that inner unity which he once sought through union with the Mistress; and just as the inconstant women once distracted his attention from his quest, so the divided churches now undermine his confidence in the hypothetical Spouse.

These three groups of poems do in fact form a pattern. They describe the search for the One among the Many. The terms used are erotic in the *Songs and Sonets*, philosophical in *An Anatomie of the World* and theological in the *Divine Poems*. I have used the word 'transposition' and it is of some importance. From a psychological point of view there is no progress. We must not think of the groups as a sequence. Their movement is circular and the image they suggest is that of concentric circles.

## BOOKS

### When Love Sows Hate and Ingratitude

THE RISING. By H. R. Lenormand. Thames and Hudson. \$3.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

"NOT by the whole body of my work, but by part of it, I belong to the race of witnesses and of accusers." So wrote H. R. Lenormand, looking back on thirty-five years of artistic life, and some thirty successful plays. In 1940, he found himself banned, his work proscribed in his native France. His autobiography was written because drama is written to be played, and Lenormand found himself in exactly the position in which Kleist had found himself, when Napoleon forbade the representation of the German poet's dramas, in his own country.

Henri Lenormand was born in 1882 in Paris. His father was a composer, and as a child Henri loved listening to his music, on the "Pleyel à queue" that accompanied the family on its every move. The Lenormands really came from Normandy, and still, in the 1880s, had their roots there. Henri's childhood was as full of the sights and sounds of Caen, and of tiny Norman villages and of small towns (each with their specialty of queencake or ginger bread)

as Proust's had been. He was early a dramatist, preferring the account of a great-grandfather condemned to death in the Revolution and hidden by his wife in a clothes closet, to that of a quiet great-uncle, one of France's most famous botanists. And when, at ten, he saw his first play, "The Taking of Peking," he already suffered from the division in himself that made him the tragedian he was: "I was moved by the blood-reddened shirts of the missionaries," he notes, "but I made excuses for the Chinese. This childist ambivalence remained with me all my life, and is particularly evident in my colonial plays."

It is perhaps most evident in *The Rising*, M. Lenormand's novel, written during his enforced silence, and published in France in 1951—the year of his death—as *Troubles*. This is a tremendously objective book, both in form and content. Its hero is an old Administrator, at his desk in a small town on a high Algerian plateau, half Arab, half French. He cares desperately for the natives, for the starving children, for their listless parents, too weak to work.

His second wife, an old harpy who longs for the iron hand, the death-dealing airplane, as being the

only way to handle the native, is a parody of past French glory. Les-cure, the devoted doctor; Moucherville, the Administrator's only friend, whose love for the Arabs leads him to join them in sedition; the chief clerk, doing his duty with no sympathy either for his superiors or for the Arabs: all are nervous, jumpy, on a burning July morning when Natalie Chumara arrives from Tiflis. Her blue eyes, open unto horizons of faith and her exquisite profile, drawn by a Persian miniaturist, attracts the aging Administrator, "ogling young girls on the sly with dull shifty eyes," and his awful son Fred, whose education "nothing less than a reformatory could accomplish."

Natalie is only interested in fomenting a rebellion: notebook in hand, she investigates, from the Administrator's car, or from Bou Hamara's rooms in the native quarter, with only one objective—to arouse. Very compactly, very completely, the novel builds up into the ghastliest of tragedies.

Natalie, after becoming Bou Hamara's lover in order to get him going, kills him with the Administrator's revolver, in order to persuade the tribes to revolt. They do, swoop-

ing down on Ain-el-Hamin, but killing more Moslems, more of their fellow-countrymen, than of the French. Natalie has used the money given her by the French Communist party to buy food, to buy arms; but the desert Arabs hate the city dwellers more than they hate the French, and the only result of Natalie's efforts is some indiscriminate killing, and the recall, without a pension, of the gentle Administrator, who is succeeded by a brute. Mud villages are machine-gunned from the air; the goodwill Lescure, Moucherolle and the Administrator had precariously built up, is hopelessly jettisoned, Natalie herself dies, and the implication is that human decency at its best is a brief candle, variously and continually imperiled.

Curiously, for one whom faith seems never to have troubled, the last words on the whole situation are put by M. Lenormand into the mouth of a Moslem holy man.

"The answer he [the Administrator] had been looking for in vain was given him by Si Achmet. As they drew near the cemetery, the holy

man placed two fingers on the brocade sleeve, and . . . said softly, 'She [Natalie] believed that man can save mankind. And the salvation of man . . . is the work of God. She didn't know that he who suffers through love must transform his love into prayer . . . Any love except the love of God sows hate and ingratitude'."

Inevitably, such a novel brings E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* to mind. And, allowing for the patina of accrued reverence that has hallowed the English book, M. Lenormand seems to have equalled, if not actually surpassed, his great predecessor. Perhaps because we now require a man to say, not to hint; to call a spade a spade, nor to circumlocute that it is a bloody shovel. And then, too, perhaps because only a Latin can see the true inwardness of sex, neither deifying it, as the Orientals do (both Lenormand and Forster make that very clear) nor despising it, as do the Anglo-Saxons.

Natalie's body is as much part of her doom as Fred's cowardice and

filthy-mindedness are of his; the Administrator, for all his pathetic goodwill, ends as a child-Arab's thrall and victim. But M. Lenormand saw what M. Camus in *The Plague* did not: that humanism is no answer.

"I might," Lenormand wrote of himself, "have been the bird of presage obstinately croaking around twentieth century man. In thirty or so plays, the best of which were not the oftenest played, I could have announced the furious cyclone which still rages. But sometimes it seemed to me that an equivocal complicity united me to the cyclone, rather than to its victims." And, again, elsewhere he states, "I am a bad soldier in last battles, a traitor in panic, when faced with results, I play hooky from suffering." Indeed his weakness is that he can see too well: only as an artist does he commit himself.

Yet the position he bravely and unequivocally takes as an artist, he evades as a human being, grumbling at the Nazis rather than censuring them. He has pity in his heart both for the nameless victims of Setif,

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blown to bits by the same airplanes that were defending the Allies against Hitler, and for the gentle curé whose heart was cut out and eaten by the enraged Arabs he had befriended. But he does not protest.

And he describes his own life's end: "the creative flood, withdrawing, leaves mud behind it, not golden sand."

Yet his plays will remain: "L'Homme et ses fantomes" (*Man and His Ghosts*), "Le Mangeur de Rêves" (*The Dream Eater*), "Simoun": these will endure, even if their author and their subject—French colonial life—both disappear. And to these must be added *The Rising*.

## Glimpse of Ireland

LEAVES FOR THE BURNING. By Mervyn Wall. Devin-Adair. \$3.

By THEODORE MAYNARD

THE characterization and conversation in this rather brief novel are handled about as well as it is possible to imagine; the only thing

lacking is a real plot, and that does not much matter. The occasion is that week in September 1948 when the body of the poet W. B. Yeats was being brought, fastened to the deck of an ancient corvette purchased from England, from Nice to Sligo, to be permanently buried, where Yeats had said he wished to lie, under Ben Bulbin. But the four men who journey to Sligo—three of them college friends, two minor officials, and a bank clerk with frustrated ambitions to be a painter, along with a doctor who joins their party, are merely making of the Yeats funeral an excuse for a spree.

One of them is wishing a little relief from a wife to whom he is a disappointment; another wants to get away for a while from an official superior with whom he has had a slight falling-out; still another thinks this a good opportunity to call on a young woman in the West whom he had wanted to marry thirteen years earlier; and if the doctor has any motive, it is that he has severely injured a man in a bar-room brawl and is being threatened with legal action.

But for all of them any motive serves, and they all have a good time, never being quite sober but also never helplessly drunk.

The incidents that occur are slight but always amusing, and the conversation is always witty, though not so witty as not to seem quite natural. Everybody is highly articulate, from the senator and the county manager down to the few illiterate persons presented. But most of them are filled with a sense of futility in their middle age, and one or two of them have a good deal of humbug, which, however, makes them all the more entertaining.

These "Leaves for the Burning" are Catholic—some of the women in a starched, censorious and unlovely fashion—and the men, when they are not perfunctory, are using religion for their official advancement.

If this picture of contemporary Ireland is even moderately near the truth, it cannot be considered very flattering. Yet one must suppose that Mr. Wall, who since 1934 has been in the Irish Civil Service and for the past three years Program Officer in

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Radio Eireann, should know what he is talking about, though one may continue to hope that the explanation is that he has not been able to resist his many opportunities for humorous exaggeration. On the other hand one cannot but suspect that, with an eye on his official position, he has been careful to exercise some degree of discretion. In any event, he has written a book which, within the limits indicated, comes close to perfection. Those who are willing to lay aside their prepossessions (of whatever kind) will find *Leaves for the Burning* excellent fun.

## One of Six Million

EDITH STEIN. By Teresia de Spiritu Sancto, O.D.C. Translated by Cecily Hastings and Donald Nicholl. Sheed and Ward. \$3.25.

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

**E** DITH STEIN was a distinguished German-Jewish philosopher who converted to Catholicism, became a discalced Carmelite, and

died at the hands of the Nazis. This collection of biographical data was compiled by the prioress of the Cologne Carmel; it was first published in Nuremburg in 1948; it had gone into a fifth printing and four translations by 1950; it is now made available to Americans.

All this is testimony to the eminence of the subject. No woman of the present century, unless perhaps Simone Weil, has so captured the imagination of intellectual Catholics. A case is being prepared for the proposal of her ultimate canonization, and people of all levels of mind are claiming evidence of her intervention in circumstances possibly miraculous.

This book is a chronological selection of reminiscences about Edith Stein, and a few extracts from her own writing. It was planned as source material for future biographers and advocates. It gives, therefore, an episodic account, and does not betray its own intention if it makes its subject something less than lifelike.

This treatment gets somewhat in

the way of the reader's enjoying his initial introduction, as though Sister Benedicta is being presented through her own convent parlor grille. It has the virtue of stimulating curiosity, however; one wonders what the whole story was.

There is indication that in life Edith Stein was not easy to know. Her deepest attachments were for her family, and although her friends loved her, and she is described as "generous with love and warmth" and full of "affectionate wit," she was undoubtedly the bearer of a complex personality whose inner core—where everything that was most significant in her life took place—was not readily accessible even to those closest to her.

It may be that she did not fully understand herself, or the strange progression of events that claimed her; there is that feeling in some of her letters ("... the occasional insights we receive into the mystery we think we are receiving represent no more than a fleeting glimmer of what will remain a divine mystery until the day when all will

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be revealed. My greatest joy lies in *hoping* for the vision which is yet to come.") (Italics mine.)

Yet at some point in her life, she made her "fiat," and with terrifying devotion saw through that agreement to the end.

The youngest of seven children, Edith was reared in a house bristling with intellectual activity. It is no surprise that she was something of a child prodigy. Her brothers and sisters adored her; her widowed mother, until well past eighty the active manager of her husband's lumber business, admitted that Edith was her favorite. The family was orthodox, the upbringing of the children was in all ways scrupulous, but within this somewhat rigid framework, Edith's personality asserted itself early. By the time she was adolescent, she was a confessed agnostic.

She made a brilliant school record at Breslau and went on to Göttingen, the university town in Central Germany which she described as "a paradise for philosophers." There she met Adolf Reinach, Hans Conrad, Moritz Geiger, and others, all former pupils of Theodor Lipps; most importantly, for in later years she was his friend, confidante and assistant at Freiburg, she met Edmund Husserl, the father of phenomenology. In some measure, she in time made Husserl's field her own.

Reinach was converted to Christianity during World War I. In the terms just preceding, the Munich phenomenologist Max Scheler lectured on religious questions such as "The Essence of Holiness." A circle around Husserl began to be impelled toward Catholicism. Edith observed, studied, but was detached. A friend of those days says, "Edith Stein had only one love: knowledge. She had only one passion: books to deepen her knowledge."

But the spade work was accomplished, and in time the detachment shattered. When she wrote her essay, "Plant Soul—Animal Soul—Human Soul", she found that she had revealed before she knew it her belief in God. Soon after, on a vacation visit, she found the auto-

biography of St. Teresa of Avila. She read all night; when she closed the book at dawn, she said to herself, "That is the truth," and went at once to the village church to hear Mass ("Nothing was strange to me. Thanks to my previous studies, I understand even the smallest ceremonies.") After Mass, she followed the celebrant to the parish house, and requested baptism.

When she had to tell her mother, a convinced and orthodox Jewess, what she had done, she went on her knees before the old lady. "I am a Catholic, mother," she said. Her mother looked at her in silence, then the two women wept together for a long time.

The events following are by now familiar: the annual Easter pilgrimages to the Abbey of Beuron, and her submission to the spiritual direction of the young Abbot Raphael Walzer; the lectureships at Freiburg and elsewhere; the prestige and acclaim attending her association with Husserl.

But paralleling the ascent of Edith Stein was that other, deadly ascendancy in the political sphere; pogroms were in the wind, and she who apparently had long had a premonition of this, faced the personal question of what she must do.

Her solution was the Carmelite convent at Cologne.

She received the habit and the name Sister Teresia Benedicta in 1934. Understandably, she was criticized for this. The persecution of Jews was more predictable than the persecution of Catholics; to many, it seemed that Edith Stein was seeking sanctuary.

Exidently no assumption could have been more false. It is impossible here not to make comparison with that other intense and philosophical Jewess, who chose the reverse pattern of action, and almost against her will, it seems; one has the impression of Simone Weil digging her heels into the ground, at the last, to avoid entering the Church, for the sake of those others who remained outside. For the sake of the same, Edith Stein went "in," and irrevocably; she died of it.

Extricated from Cologne just in time as the persecutions closed in, and transferred to the Carmel at Echt, Holland, she was for a while safe. Then the Germans came, and the Sisters began negotiations for a transfer to Switzerland. A few days before plans were completed S. S. men took Sister Benedicta away.

What happened then is a jumbled record of scattered report and rumor. She was removed to the Amersfoort concentration camp, then to Westerbork, then deported.

It is probable that she died—in the gas chamber—at Ravensbruck-Auschwitz in early August, 1942. Another report suggests that she must have died much later, and another place.

Out of the morass stands one fact. On Passion Sunday, 1939, Sister Benedicta wrote to her prioress: "I beg your Reverence's permission to offer myself to the heart of Jesus as a sacrificial expiation for the sake of true peace: that the Antichrist's sway may be broken, if possible without another world-war, and that a new order may be established. I am asking this today because already it is the twelfth hour. I know that I am nothing, but Jesus wills it, and He will call many more to the same sacrifice in these days."

What underlay that fatal petition, the world will doubtless never know. Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto can hardly be blamed for failing to expose her subject's interior life. What she has done is sufficient; this is a day and an hour when the opportunity to engage with heroes is as rare as it is a compelling necessity. The "true peace" envisioned by Edith Stein may be forever a phantom on earth, but even the vision cannot be shared without the testimony of lives like hers.

#### REVIEWERS

Theodore Maynard has had a long career as poet, historian and biographer. His next book, to be published later this year, is called "The Catholic Way."

Jean Holzhauer lives in Milwaukee and writes reviews for several Catholic publications.

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# *The Christian and Politics*

"The strength of a democratic body politic supposes justice, because it uses human energies as energies of free men, not of slaves. Nay more: a supreme effort of all the energies of freedom, in their own spiritual realm, is needed to compensate for the momentary increase in physical strength that is given Machiavellian powers by their determination to use any means whatsoever. And such a supreme effort cannot arise if the body politic ignores moral values and standards. In reality strength is supremely strong only if not strength, but justice, is the supreme standard.

"We know that the flesh is weak. It would be nonsense to require perfection and impeccability from anyone who seeks justice. We must forgive democracies for their accidental weaknesses and deficiencies. If however, their exertions toward uprooting injustice from their own lives and toward making their means worthy of their ends were decidedly insufficient, then might history perhaps be less lenient with them than we would wish.

"It is possible that the present and future course of human history will confront democracies with fearful trials and fateful alternatives. They might then be tempted to lose their reasons for living for their very lives' sake. As Henri Bergson put it, the democratic feeling and philosophy has its deepest root in the Gospel. To try to reduce democracy to technocracy, and to expel from it the Gospel inspiration together with all faith in the supra-material, supra-mathematical, and supra-sensory realities, would be to try to deprive it of its very blood.

"Democracy can only live on Gospel inspiration. It is by virtue of the Gospel inspiration that democracy can overcome its direst trials and temptations. It is by virtue of the Gospel inspiration that democracy can progressively carry out its momentous task of the moral rationalization of political life."

JACQUES MARITAIN  
in *The Commonweal*  
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